

REMARKS

Prior to entry of the amendments presented above, claims 1, 2, 4 and 6-13 were pending. Claims 1, 2, 4, 6, and 11-12 have been canceled, claims 7, 10, and 13 have been amended and claims 16-23 have been added. The cancellation of claims is made herein without prejudice or disclaimer of the subject matter recited therein, and applicants expressly reserve all rights to such subject matter, including the right to file continuation and/or divisional applications. The amendments are fully supported by the specification and claims as originally filed.

In the Office Action mailed November 14, 2003, claims 6-9 were allowed and claims 1, 2, 4, and 10-13 were objected to for allegedly containing subject matter withdrawn from consideration. No claims were rejected.

Support for Amendments

Added claims 16 and 17 are supported by original claims 6 and 11, respectively. Claim 22 is supported by original claim 12. Claims 18 and 19 are supported by original claims 6 and 11, respectively. Claims 20 and 21 are supported by original claim 4. Claim 23 is supported by original claim 10. Claims 7-10, 13, and 16-22, including independent claims 16 and 17, are thus pending for reexamination and reconsideration, which are respectfully requested in view of the foregoing amendments and following remarks.

Claim objections

The only issue remaining in this case pertains to the scope of the claims. In the response filed August 28, 2003, applicants set forth reasons why the Examiner's withdrawal of subject matter from within the pending claims is improper. Without acquiescing in the propriety of this withdrawal, applicants have now amended the claims in a manner substantially as required by the Examiner. Applicants believe that the claim amendments require no additional search and place the claims in condition for allowance. Accordingly, entry of the amendments and favorable consideration pursuant to 37 CFR § 1.116 respectfully are requested.

CONCLUSION

In view of the above remarks and amendments, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Early notice to that effect is earnestly solicited. The Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the number listed below if the Examiner believes such would be helpful in advancing the application to issue.

If any additional fees are required for the filing of this paper, applicants authorize the Commissioner to charge any deficiency to Deposit Account No. 08-1641.

Respectfully submitted,

Date: April 20, 2004

By



Customer No. 26633
HELLER EHRMAN WHITE &
MCAULIFFE LLP
1666 K Street, N.W., Suite 300
Washington, DC 20006
Telephone: (202) 912-2142
Facsimile: (202) 912-2020

Paul M. Booth
Attorney for Applicant
Registration No. 40,244